

Feline Idiopathic Cystitis

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Overview

Feline idiopathic cystitis (FIC) is an inflammation of the urinary bladder. This condition is also known as feline idiopathic lower urinary tract disease (FiLUTD) or feline urologic syndrome (FUS). FIC has been estimated to affect up to 1% of the cat population.

Despite many years of research, the cause of FIC remains unknown. Factors that may play a role in the development of FIC include viruses, type of diet fed (especially dry food diets with high mineral content), stress, confinement to a strictly indoor environment, and genetic factors.

Although FIC is commonly referred to as a bladder infection, bacterial infections are not common causes. In some cats, particularly males, FIC can become life-threatening. Accumulated inflammatory debris and mineral crystals may form a plug that obstructs the urethra resulting in a medical emergency. FIC affects both male and female cats, but female cats rarely develop urinary tract obstruction because their urethra is shorter and wider than the urethra of male cats.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Feline idiopathic cystitis is generally diagnosed by a thorough history, physical examination and urinalysis. Abdominal x-rays are often recommended to evaluate for bladder stones.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Cats with cystitis should have free access to water. Many will benefit from a change in diet to canned food and possibly a prescription diet. Some cats are treated with antibiotics, steroids, pain medications or a tricyclic antidepressant. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Blood in the urine
- Increased frequency of urinations
- Straining to urinate
- Distressed meowing while urinating

- Increased grooming of the genital region
- Urinating in inappropriate locations (often in cool smooth surfaces such as bathtubs and sinks)

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*